

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 IO-13 JUSE-00 NSAE-00

SNM-02 TRSE-00 USIA-06 NSC-05 OES-06 OMB-01 AID-05

AGR-05 DODE-00 L-03 PM-04 IGA-02 HEW-04 SS-15 SP-02

/090 W

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R 230531Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1995

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

DEA HQS WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 2568

BANGKOK PASS DEA

DEA HQS PASS JENSON/AO, CASEY/EN, SMITH/IG

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, BM

SUBJ: BURMESE INTEREST IN HERBICIDE SPRAY PROGRAM

REF: RANGOON 2481

1. GUB INTEREST IN A HERBICIDE SPRAYING PROGRAM HAS BEEN CLEARLY SIGNALLED BOTH INFORMALLY AND MORE SPECIFICALLY BY THE INTRODUCTION OF AGRICULTURE MINISTRY SPECIALISTS INTO THE MEETING BETWEEN GUB AND US OFFICIALS REPORTED REFTEL. THIS INDICATES THAT GUB POLICY APPROVAL HAS BEEN GIVEN AT LEAST TO EXPLORE THE APPLICABILITY OF A SPRAY PROGRAM TO BURMA. WE ARE ENCOURAGED BY THIS DEVELOPMENT, SINCE IT OFFERS THE POSSIBILITY OF A QUANTUM LEAP IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST ILLICIT NARCOTICS PRODUCTION HERE, AND WE BELIEVE THE USG SHOULD MOVE VIGOROUSLY TO SUPPORT THE GUB'S INITIATIVE, WITH A VIEW TOWARD HELPING THEM FIELD AT LEAST A PILOT PROJECT CAPABILITY FOR THE 1976-77 CROP

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(DECEMBER-FEBRUARY).

2. CONSEQUENTLY, IN ADDITION TO SUPPLYING THE INFORMATIONAL MATERIAL DIRECTLY REQUESTED BY THE BURMESE (SEE REFTTEL), WE BELIEVE THEY SHOULD BE GIVEN AN ILLUSTRATIVE PROGRAM DESCRIBING WHAT HERBICIDE SPRAYING IN BURMA MIGHT ENTAIL. THIS ILLUSTRATIVE PROGRAM SHOULD ADDRESS AT LEAST THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

(A) IDENTIFICATION, DESCRIPTION AND AVAILABILITY OF APPROPRIATE CHEMICALS. WHAT ARE THE PROS AND CONS OF EACH? (NOTE: THE BURMESE HAVE SPECIFICALLY INQUIRED ABOUT 2-4D).

(B) WHAT IS THE EXPERIENCE GAINED ON THE PROBLEM OF LOCATING POPPY FIELDS IN MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN SUCH AS NORTHERN BURMA? IN OTHER PROGRAMS, HOW HAVE THE FIELDS BEEN LOCATED? IN THE BEGINNING STAGES, CAN FIELDS SIMPLY BE EYEBALLED FROM A HELICOPTER OR LIGHT AIRCRAFT OR IS SOME TYPE OF SOPHISTICATED OVERHEAD PHOTOGRAPHY A PRE-REQUISITE?

(C) WE UNDERSTAND THE BELL HELICOPTERS THE BURMESE NOW HAVE CAN BE FITTED FOR SPRAYING. IS THIS CORRECT? DESCRIBE WHAT IS INVOLVED IN HELICOPTER MODIFICATION. IS THE EQUIPMENT DETACHABLE SO THAT THE HELICOPTERS MAY ALSO BE USED FOR NON-SPRAYING PURPOSES?

(D) WHAT ARE THE EXPERIENCE FACTORS ON NUMBERS OF ACRES A SINGLE HELICOPTER CAN SPRAY PER DAY? HOW HAVE OTHER AREAS MET REFUELING PROBLEMS FOR HELICOPTERS OPERATING OUT OF FORWARD BASES?

(E) HOW MUCH TRAINING WOULD BE REQUIRED TO QUALIFY BAF HELICOPTER PILOTS FOR SPRAYING MISSIONS? COULD THE TRAINING BE DONE IN BURMA?

(F) WHAT ARE THE COST FIGURES FOR A SPRAYING PROGRAM? WHAT WOULD THE ANTICIPATED COST BE TO THE BURMESE?

(G) IF THE BURMESE DECIDE TO INITIATE A TEST PROGRAM,
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HOW QUICKLY COULD WE RESPOND TO THEIR REQUEST?

3. OTHER DETAILS WHICH COULD USEFULLY BE INCLUDED IN SUCH AN ILLUSTRATIVE PROGRAM WILL UNDOUBTEDLY OCCUR TO SPECIALISTS IN THIS FIELD.

4. THE BURMESE HAVE STATED THEIR INTENTION TO DO FIELD TESTS OF HERBICIDES. IN ADDITION TO THE INFORMATIONAL

MATERIAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE PROGRAM, COULD WE PROVIDE THEM
WITH SOME APPROPRIATE SAMPLES FOR THE TESTS?

5. THE BURMESE ARE ANTICIPATING OUR RESPONSE TO THEIR
HERBICIDE INITIATIVE, AND WE HOPE IT CAN BE SUPPLIED ON
A HIGH PRIORITY BASIS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DRUG CONTROL, MEETING AGENDA
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 JUL 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MartinML
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976RANGOO02568
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760283-1123
From: RANGOON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760728/aaaaaxyu.tel
Line Count: 122
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 RANGOON 2481
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MartinML
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 MAY 2004 by GarlanWA>; APPROVED <15 SEP 2004 by MartinML>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BURMESE INTEREST IN HERBICIDE SPRAY PROGRAM
TAGS: SNAR, BM, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006